a science of æsthetics ought not to deter us from attempting it. The doubt seems to be, if there are sufficient primary and absolute facts or impressions, that is, impressions having the force of universal concurrence and self-evidence, to form sufficient bases for the deduction of first principles? However limited they may prove, let the solution of this problem be our aim. We are so accustomed to regard the phenomena of nature, through the light and teachiog of science, that it is to us impossible but to regard them only as effects of hidden causes. But had we lived before the great revelation of induction, we doubtless should have yet the same overwhelming complexity as now in respect to the phenomena of our art,—a hopeless enravelment of forms and images, the cause of whose impressions it is impossible to reduce to general principles.

We have in respect to art certain fixed or prevalent impressions; these gradually accumulated, affect our judgment in every instance that objective art is before it. We know that these impressions form to us the axioms of art; each has his own; but do we not allow that some are universal? if so, we want such to be defined,—they would constitute the science of æsthetics.

Some indications of effecting this study of criticism, and reducing it to proportional and axiomatic form, have appeared. The "Maxims and Theorems" of Professor Donaldson, contains the following remark in its preface:—"Some of the maxims may appear paradoxical, others empirical, but it is time that architects should apply themselves in earnest to the subject, so that just principles should be thoroughly investigated. We ought no longer to have to wander in uncertainty as to the laws of our art, after the experience and lessons to be derived from the monuments erected during 4,000 years. It may appear remarkable that this has not been done before; but the principles of a science are always those which are learned last; a full clear and comprehensive grasp of those fundamental notions on which a science is founded, is only attained after a very long course of intimacy with the working of the details."

It would seem, then, not only to be a subject likely to give a higher tone to the study of art, but an effort eminently becoming this age, a duty arising out of our very condition and privileges as those who inherit the rich bequeathment of art. The successors of those who developed art to such perfection, and in such distinct phases, ought to make some use of such spoils, beyond delineating or patching them up. Let it be to define and group together those laws, which they so successfully illustrated. And to this end, if I mistake not, is intended the valuable contribution of Mr. Fergusson, that from the history of art as the experimental phenomena, the science or principles of criticism shall be deduced. And what shall we say of the brilliant but erratic Ruskin? his "Seven Lamps" are evidently an effort to the elucidation of art, by giving the spirit, motive, and principle, which constitute at once its law and inspiration. Let not such works fall to the ground. They are the dawn of a loftier literature than has hitherto been associated with our profession.

All our perceptions of objects, whether of nature or art creation, take their complexion from the truthfulness or error of our knowledge in relation to them;—to properly perceive we must be correctly informed. There is throughout art and our perceptions of it, a philosophy of emotion; and surely I rightly apprehend the intent of our studies, when I say that one of its highest aims is to pierce through the mystery that veils all that is beautiful in art, to detect that mechanism, the system and law that every where pervades it.

C. C. Creeke.

Fall of a New Church.—At Kingsdown, near Walmer, a new church is building, at the expense of an individual, and was externally approaching completion, but last week the west-end, which comprised a traceried window, and a bell-turret, suddenly fell to the ground with a tremendous crash. Providentially the workmen had not arrived. The accident is ascribed, locally, to wet weather, and a gale of wind.

ON THE GOTHIC ERA OF ORNAMENTAL ART.

In pursuance of the series of lectures on ancient ornamental art delivered by Mr. Ralph Wornum, at the Government School of Design, Somerset House, the lecturer proceeded, on Friday in week before last, to treat of Gothic Art, more especially as regards its ornamental interest to the designer.

After slightly recalling the subjects of his two previous lectures * on the Ornamental Art of the Middle Ages, in which he had treated, firstly, of Christian symbolism and the most prominent features of Byzantine art; and, secondly, of its modification into Saracenic art; the third and final development of these into Gothic principles was then entered on.

The elements, said the lecturer, are still identical, the combinations only are diversified. Such are the three great styles of middle-age or, critically speaking, Christian art; for the Renaissance, and its final result, the *Cinquecento*, were a decided repudiation of the Christian forms, and as positive a re-adoption of the Heathen. That the Saracenic art was Christian may seem rather startling, but it was so, inasmuch as it was developed by Christian Greeks out of Byzantine elements for Saracenic masters. On the other hand the *Cinquecento* is a Heathen style, not that they were Heathens that practised it, but that its types were Greek and Roman.

In pointing out the distinctive feature of Gothic architecture,—its verticality, in contrast with the horizontality of the Romanesque, the lecturer then alluded to Schlegel's idea that, as the whole tendency of the Gothic is vertical, the motive to its adoption must have been to carry the eye upwards, and with the eye the mind, to the contemplation of things holy and above the sphere of this world. But whatever may have been the motive, he must observe that the fact of verticality did not necessarily imply that the design was absolutely lofty in itself,—its individual members are only higher than they are wide: it is such a distinction as that between the human and other animal forms, in their respective natural postures,—the human being vertical, the quadruped horizontal, although the latter may stand absolutely higher than the former. The extreme into which this verticality ran is the Perpendicular style, in which the Gothic was exhausted, and ceased in a sudden transition to the Horizontal, in the sixteenth century, when the Tudor or late Perpendicular appeared in the flat Tudor arch and its square and oblong compartments.

So early even as the seventh century the pointed arch was a standard form in the buildings of Cairo in Egypt. The Saracens carried it into Sicily, of which in the eleventh century the Normans became masters, and the profusely decorated Norman arose, with its zig-zag and its pointed arch, as an amalgamation of styles. Spreading to England, the richest remains of our early architecture date from the twelfth century.

The history of architectural ornament in England from the eleventh until the sixteenth century, is a history of perpetual changes. During this era of five centuries we had no less than seven different styles of architecture,—Saxon or Romanesque, Round Norman, Pointed Norman or Transition, Early English, Decorated, Perpendicular, and Tudor. Hence it is that a building which occupied more than one generation, or at least two, in its completion, was not carried out in the same style,—as in York Minster or St. Alban's Abbey, for example. Subsequent artists would not work out the ideas of their predecessors, except in so far as a nave, for instance, commenced with the round arch, had a chance of being so completed, but with different decorations. Even this, however, was not the case with St. Alban's, or with Westminster Abbey. In fact our ancestors took much greater pains to eclipse or demolish the works of their forefathers than to preserve or imitate them. The circumstance of a thing having *been done* appears to have been sufficient reason why it should *not be done again*. How true this is, is evident from the fact that the average duration of every style, and very nearly the actual duration, was only 70 years—the age of a man

Thus, from the building of the old Abbey of Westminster by Edward the Confessor to the spoliation of the monasteries by Henry VIII., when all Gothic art ceased in this country, is exactly seven times seventy years, and comprises as exactly the seven styles of English ecclesiastical architecture. From this you have a formula which will give you very nearly the period of any particular style, as exact as the transition from one style to another will possibly admit. All you have to recollect is their consecutive order, and the starting date which you may take as 1066, the close of Edward the Confessor's reign, or about the middle of the eleventh century.

Let us suppose that in 1066, the year of the Norman accession, the Romanesque style was established: after a lapse of seventy years you will find the Norman, or Zigzag style, flourishing; in another seventy years the Transition, or Plantagenet; in another seventy the Early English Gothic; again, after an equal period, we shall find the Decorated to prevail; and after a sixth seventy, at Henry VII.'s accession, we find the Lancasterian style, the Perpendicular; and after the seventh seventy, or at the close of Henry VIII.'s reign, we have the Tudor, in which the Gothic expires.

I am quite aware, continued the lecturer, that these seven styles are now commonly spoken of as four—Norman, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular; but this is not a critical distinction of styles; Norman here comprises three styles, Early English two, and Perpendicular two,—Tudor, or the late plain and square Perpendicular, or rather Horizontal, being overlooked as a distinct style.

There is no advantage in reducing the number of distinctive designations; for where so much is comprised in a single term, it renders it very difficult to comprehend in what the characteristics consist: the exceptions are far more numerous than the examples of the rule. Norman, as a designation of style from the conquest to Henry III. is no more specific than that of Gothic for the architecture which prevailed in England from Henry III. to Henry VIII. In one sense, every building in England is Norman, erected during the Norman dynasty, from Edward the Confessor to James I.

The ornamental designer cannot have too many distinctions of style, for every distinction implies some one well-understood class of ornamental forms, and his success, and the success of the ornamental manufactures of his country, depend upon his mastery of these distinctions, for each distinction is a store of invention, and will bear its fruit. Gothic ornament is quite as applicable to printed and woven fabrics as to hard wares.

With the aid of numerous drawings, &c., the lecturer then proceeded to point out the characteristics of each separate style, remarking that in this investigation they must, of course, look at the styles as ornamentists, not as architects. The examples were from stone, wood, iron, and ornamental manufactures.

While exhibiting the diagrams, &c., illustrative of the details of his subject, the idea of Metzger, the German architect, that the varieties of Gothic bases may be deduced from crystaline forms, was favourably viewed. This idea, said the lecturer, is a good one, and if we follow it up, we may produce ten thousand beautiful arrangements, all as new as beautiful. The snow crystals from the interesting work of Captain Scoresby (exhibited) have only to be developed into bases and shafts with a few splays and bands, and you will have a clustered pillar to rival anything in Gothic architecture, early or decorated—uniting the prominent points of the crystals by straight lines for the bases, and round and hollow lines for the shafts: the mouldings of the arches are a species of continuation of the shaft. These crystals, however, he remarked, will suggest forms for many other species of ornamental art besides Gothic shafts; as, for instance, diapers for encaustic tiles; and certainly an endless variety of patterns for cotton prints, or diapers, indeed, of any kind.

Recapitulating briefly the most prominent characteristics of the seven styles, we have,—

In the Saxon, or early Norman Romanesque, the round arch, square abacus, cushion capital, sometimes with a little Byzantine foliage: no other ornament.

In the specifically Norman, introduced

* See p. 330, *ante*.

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